EML Accent

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Mansfield University
English & Modern Languages Newsletter

## A GOOD Nerving Experience

–by Sara Moyer

*Sara Moyer*

*Sara Moyer, MU English Major and Women's Studies minor, presented her essay, "Are they Just Stereotypical Cartoons?" at the Susquehanna University Undergraduate Conference in February. The experience inspired the following article.*

My abstract was accepted for the undergraduate literature and creative writing conference at Susquehanna University on February 18th. It was a great experience and I gained insight about many different works of literature. I never realized that so many people are so talented. I am in awe of what others can do.

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## ¡Qué chulo! (How beautiful!)

–by Tasha Buffington

Greetings from Spain! I have been here in Murcia (southern Spain) since the beginning of September. Even though I have only been here a couple months I have already noticed changes in my attitude and behavior. I have adapted to a new lifestyle and a different culture. For instance, meals (based on people with jobs): breakfast is small, or even nonexistent for some, around 8 or so (most offices open at 9). Then there's snack and break time around 11-a pastry and coffee. Offices close at 2 for "siesta" or lunch. This is the most important meal of the day. During the summer (April to September) it is also the hottest time of the day, so it's good to stay indoors. People rest and relax. At 5 they go back to work until around 9. Then it's dinner time. This meal is usually small and light. Spaniards are also very family-oriented. It is normal for grandparents to live with their son or daughter and grandchildren in one

*Tasha Buffington in Murcia*

## Path to Worldly Teaching

–by Dr. Monique Oyallon

How did I end up where I am professionally and yes, geographically? What drew me to the field and the profession? Not much predestined me to be teaching French at Mansfield University in the beginning of the twenty-first century—and maybe everything led me that way. I was born in France, I grew up in France, and I come from a family with strong mathematical traditions. Both my parents were math teachers, as are both my brothers, so it was pretty clear to me all my school years that I would not escape some sort of mathematical or scientific training, despite my moderate talents and weak inspiration. I was ready to follow the path my family wanted for me, though without enthusiasm.

But then, toward the end of my high school years in the southern French city of Pau, I became obsessed with Russia and the Russian language. I had not chosen to study Russian in high school, as I could have done, so I needed to invest energy in learning the language by myself with self-study books and a few evening classes

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Please, send news, announcements, and contributions to: ksanner@mansfield.edu

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## A GOOD Nerving Experience

–by Sara Moyer

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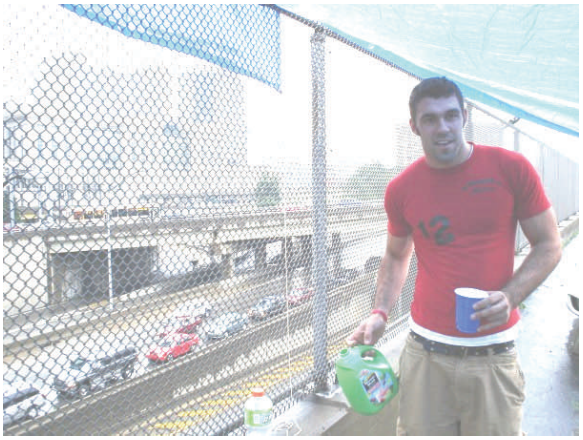
Much about the conference could possibly be seen as nerve-racking: from reading your work in front of strangers to just sharing your ideas. It is unnerving to read something that you put much time into, knowing that others are formulating their own opinions about your work. Most people who presented had some sort of pre-presentation jitters. Even though we could sit and read our papers, most saw it as a nerve-racking experience, including myself. However, once you realize that you are sitting in a room with like minds, the idea of placing your thoughts in the open is much more comforting.

When presenting at a conference, one is always afraid that something will go wrong. Maybe it will be the worst nightmare and possibly the largest embarrassment in your life, leading you to swear that you will never do anything of this nature again. This is actually not the case, for I had the, shall I say honor, of living a conference nightmare. I was missing a page of my paper and nervously told the group what had happened and that I would "wing it." It was not until I was done that I realized I did in fact, have my entire paper and that in my nervousness I had "lost" a page. I then had to explain at the end that I had read the entire work. While this seems enough to make one wish to blend into the nearest wall, in the end I have to say it was a worthwhile experience.

The entire event is something that I am happy to have experienced and would like to do something similar again, even though a conference nightmare became my reality. It will not stop me, nor should it stop anyone else from attending events like this. Frankly, I cannot say that I wish things had gone differently, for in my eyes, whether a conference includes smooth sailing or a tsunami, in the end it is a worthwhile activity.



*Mike Lengel in Long Beach Island, NJ*

## ¡Qué chulo! (How beautiful!)

–by Tasha Buffington

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flat. Young adults usually live with their parents until they get married, usually after the age of 30. Dinner parties aren't held in the home, people go to restaurants to eat with friends. When meeting someone new or a good friend it is customary to give two kisses, one on each cheek. It is OK to take your time going everywhere. Professors and students alike can be 15 minutes late for class and it's OK. But buses are always on time, so don't be late! Finally, I don't care what Spaniards say, mullets are not cool. (Mullets are very popular here. I don't think they got the memo that they went out of style 20 years ago!) These customs have become a part of who I am. They will always be a part of me even though I will have to readjust to life in the US. But for now I am living each day immersed in everything that is Spain.

## Dream Job Before Graduation

–by Mike Lengel

*Senior English major, Mike Lengel, writes of his experience finding and securing a dream job prior to his graduation from MU this May.*

About four years ago, I stumbled across a Seattle-based photographer named Chris Jordan via a link posted on the website for my favorite band, Radiohead. The caption for the link said, "Fascinating, horrifying, beautiful photography," which is what immediately caught my attention. His photography at that time dealt with color patterns strewn throughout waste yards, shipping ports, warehouses, etc., and as it turns out, the photo entitled "Container yard #2" was the influence for the cover art for Radiohead's sixth album, *Hail to the Thief*.

More recently, Jordan's photography has shifted away from aesthetic scenery and more towards digital editing and enhancing to create photographic messages about the nature of consumerism. Since I first happened across his website, I've been a loyal follower of his work: reading interviews, listening to recorded speeches and presentations, and searching for local exhibitions (which has finally paid off: Ithaca College has a solo exhibition of his work until April). After I read an interview with him in October, I decided to email him simply to tell him how much of a fan I am, and to express how thankful I am to have discovered his work. In my email to him, I had explained that I was soon graduating and looking excitedly to enter the arts/career world, whether it be in music, film, or photography, all of which are my beloved passions.

Much to my surprise, I received an email back the same night. He said that my "message has charged the battery" of his spirit, and that it is emails like mine that remind him why he loves his job so much. He also told me to keep

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## Path to Wordly Teaching

–by Dr. Monique Oyallon

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offered by the technical school downtown. Pretty soon, my main (and only identifiable) goal became to study for a year in Russia, preferably in Moscow, at the prestigious Moscow State University. It was clear to me that to get to Russia I had to do a Russian degree at the university in Toulouse, but because of the way French higher education is organized, it was close to impossible for me to register immediately as a Russian major.
I decided to pick another major that would occupy me while I was perfecting my mastery of the Russian language and would let me make the most of my scientific training (and satisfy my family's pressures). I had no clue of what I wanted to do, but since I was supposed to be rational and choosing a professional orientation, I explored options outlined by my lycée's (my high school's) orientation office (not unlike career offices in the US), and decided that diplomacy was the thing for me. I liked history (the French revolution), politics (De Gaulle, the Algerian war, and the events of May 1968), and international relations. I enjoyed learning languages, and, after all, I figured, there must be some French diplomats in Russia! This is how I ended up registering at the University of Social Sciences in Toulouse—in economics, a field that included enough math to satisfy my parents.

I managed to complete my economics degree, discovering with some surprise along the way that economics could be a fascinating discipline—and after a couple of years I found a way to declare an additional major in Russian and linguistics as well. Nothing then was left standing between me and my goal of spending a year in Russia. At the time, studying in the Soviet Union was not a simple thing. The only way to do it was to participate in exchange programs, through cultural agreements painfully negotiated between France and the USSR. I applied to one of the grants offered by the French government and became the lucky recipient of a ten-month stipend to do research in economics in the Soviet Union.

So in the fall of 1975, I left—not for Moscow, to my chagrin—but for Leningrad, the northern Russian city now called again St. Petersburg. That was certainly the most decisive, enjoyable experience of my life so far, and I looked for ways to remain a little while longer in the country. However, one of the things I discovered during that year was that entering a diplomatic career was not the best way to interact with other cultures. In fact it looked like it was the surest way not to have any contact with anybody in your country of assignment.

After coming back to France, I finished my linguistic degree, and decided to apply for a position as lecturer of French in the USSR (still thanks to the existence of extensive reciprocal agreements between the two governments). I was recruited and placed in Riga, Latvia, one of the Baltic countries. It was not quite Russia—but Latvia was still part of the USSR in the 1970s, albeit reluctantly. There I was supposed to teach French to everybody in the country, it seemed like. I taught students in all years of study at the university, gave "refresher" courses to my colleagues at the university,

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## Q & A with Larry Uffelman

Dr. Larry Uffelman began teaching at Mansfield State College in 1969 and retired in 2000. As his answers to the following questions demonstrate, he has remained active in his scholarly pursuits.

**Q:** I've heard some people say that retirement leaves a void. What are some of the activities and pursuits that you participate in regularly?

**A:** I continue trying to improve my ability to read German. I audited a minor's worth when I retired. Now I read some German every day. I've re-read most of Charles Dickens's novels, and I continue to read a lot of general literature and history and each week I contribute a short column called "The Word Nerd" to the *Elmira Star-Gazette* newspaper. It appears on what they call the "education page" on Mondays. I enjoy doing this, just the sort of thing one who taught the history of the English language ought to do.

**Q:** I know that you managed to balance Mansfield's teaching load with impressive scholarly activity. Do you continue to research and write?

**A:** Yes. Recently I've written reviews of three books. These reviews will appear in the *Victorian Periodicals Review*. I was also invited to write an essay for *VPR*. The subject was the development of the bibliography of periodicals research that appears in the journal every other year. I've been a member of the bibliography staff since about 1973, edited it for eight years, and then dropped back onto the staff. I'm still on the staff. I've been a member of the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals since about 1970. My essay deals with the development of the society's bibliography. I've contrib-

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## Dream Job Before Graduation

–by Mike Lengel

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in touch because he had learned that very day that his current studio manager would be leaving soon, so he may need help. I quickly emailed him back saying I was extremely excited to hear such a thing, and would definitely be checking in from time to time. Sure enough, I received a response right away saying that he was already convinced that I was first on the list, and that "everything I needed to know was right there in the email: passion, integrity, dedication, self-respect." There are few words that can accurately describe my feelings at that time. It was certainly some of the best news I have ever received: not only was I receiving emails from my favorite photographer, but I would soon be moving to Seattle to work alongside him.

From there, the job was cemented. We spoke on the phone a few times to discuss more business-like, formal matters, but we needed to clear up exactly what I was being hired to do, and what it would entail. He told me he was actually creating a position for me, and would be combining the studio manager position with the production assistant, making me his first ever "production manager." I will be in charge of dealing with galleries, setting up exhibitions, gathering materials for production, making prints, and even doing a bit of public relations work. After a bit of experience, I'll be able to join him when he travels – there are galleries representing his work all over the world.

Since I've never been further west than Ohio, the move to Seattle will certainly be a big change. I can't remember the last time I was this excited, and I almost have to remind myself that I'm not going out there to simply be a fan – it's a full time job that will require time, effort, dedication, and patience. There is something about it, however, that has me believing I'll be more than happy to give all those things.

## Path to Wordly Teaching

–by Dr. Monique Oyallon

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and organized spoken French workshops for high school teachers of French from all over Latvia. I had not had any formal training in teaching French as a foreign language, and I had to work very hard to keep up with my duties.

After three years, it was no longer possible to renew my contract. I had a couple of choices: I could go back to France and teach social sciences in a lycée, or I could apply for a position of lecturer in another country. Obviously, I chose the latter. After another round of complicated negotiations with the French system, I ended up with a three-year contract to teach French language and culture at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland, in the heart of the mining area of the country.

Poland was another revelation for me: after the stifling political atmosphere of Latvia, Poland in the 1980s was a hotbed of protest and indicated very clearly the limits of the Soviet-type political regime. My Polish colleagues and the students at the university were funny, witty, eager to talk and discuss, eager to read and discover new texts and practices. The ebullience died a little down after the 1981 crackdown and imposition of martial law by General Jaruzelski, but the Polish spirit never broke down. I also met a Fulbright professor there, Bernard Koloski, and this is connected to my coming to Mansfield, since we got married a few years later.

After my years in Poland, I had again to choose, either to renew my contract and stay another three years, or apply for a year-long training the French government offered to a few teachers to train them to spread French language and culture around the globe. I had by then concluded that I had reached the limits of what I could do with my bricolage (my personal creation of teaching methods and materials)

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## Alumni News

**Jamie Sweitzer, BSE '07,** started her teaching career on January 28th—a mere month after her graduation from MU. She writes that she is "teaching four classes of English 8, one 12th grade British Literature class, and an 8th grade reading class [at Mansfield High School]. I chaperoned the ski club once. Other than that, I'm just a lump of teaching right now. Hopefully things will settle down after a while, and I will be able to get more involved. Right now, this is a typical evening: 5:00 and still grading and planning."

**Doug Owens (History/German double major)** is currently studying in Bochum, Germany.

## Faculty News

**Dr. Jimmy Guignard's** article, "Heating Up Liberal Education," appeared in the most recent issue of *Liberal Education.* You can read the piece at: http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-wi08/le-wi08_heating_up.cfm

**Dr. Brad Holtman** has been awarded sabbatical leave for the 2008-09 academic year. He will be finishing his book translation project, working on some papers and a couple of other textbook projects, and perhaps learning Chinese. He also had his book review of April Wilson's *German Quickly: A Grammar for Reading German* published in the latest issue of *Die Unterrichtspraxis. Teaching German.* Another book review for *Die Unterrichtspraxis* is forthcoming. This one is about a new intermediate German series called *Stationen* that looks very promising. In June he will attend the *Interdisciplinary Conference on Netherlandic Studies* at UNC Chapel Hill and will present his paper "From Düsseldorf to Dallas: Dutch writers in German in English."

**Dr. William Keeth** will be attending the *East Central Writing Centers Association* conference "Looking Back; Looking Forward: The Next 30 Years of ECWCA" in Columbus, Ohio on April 11th. This conference is for writing center directors and tutors around the Eastern Region of the US. He hopes to gain ideas for our labs.

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## Q & A with Larry

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uted articles on Elizabeth Gaskell's periodical publications to the *Gaskell Society Journal* too and last year I participated by videotape in a linguistics conference at Volgograd State University in Russia. My paper was titled "Elizabeth Gaskell and the Politics of Dialect." This fall an essay I was invited to contribute to a Russian philosophy journal published in Volgograd appeared. My essay was titled "Elizabeth Gaskell: Victorian Moralist." I've been investigating (but not awfully seriously just yet and perhaps never) various aspects of Victorian philology.

**Q:** It sounds as though you're as busy now as you were when you were teaching. How do you spend what little free time you must have?

**A:** Donna and I were blessed with two grandsons after we retired, and we spend as much time as we can manage and their parents can stand fawning over them. We also attend the Glimmerglass Opera in Cooperstown, NY, in the summertime and productions at the Metropolitan Opera whenever something that is especially appealing is playing. Last season, for example, we saw a magnificent production of *Eugene Onegin*.

## Sigma Tau Delta

Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society, welcomed five new members this spring: **Emily Cole, Sarah Derrick, Katie Kingsley, Mary Nance** and **Emily Russell**. Students who have a 3.3 grade point average and who have completed at least two English courses beyond general education requirements are eligible for membership. A special induction ceremony scheduled for April will honor all new inductees.

Members may apply for annual scholarships, may submit their creative or scholarly work to one of the organization's journals, and may apply to present their work at the annual conference. Chapter president, **Joe Gridley**, has already taken advantage of one of these benefits. In early March he presented his paper, "Knightly Villains and Worthless Heroes: How Geoffroi de Charny's A Knight's Own Book of Chivalry Contradicts Traditional and Contemporary Ideals of Heroism" at the annual conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

Congratulations to both Jamie Sweitzer and Rebecca Brown Webster also, who graduated with degrees in English Education in December, 2007.

WELL I remember how you smiled
To see me write your name upon
The soft sea-sand—'O! what a child!
You think you're writing upon stone!'

Walter Savage Landor
(1775–1864)

## Student News

Seven MU English majors presented papers at Susquehanna University's fourth annual Undergraduate Literature and Creative Writing Conference on Monday, February 18. The conference featured more than 50 presentations by students from 15 different colleges and universities. Dr. Jimmy Guignard and Dr. John Ulrich accompanied the students to the conference. The MU students and their presentation titles were:

Emily R. Cole, "Emerson and Imagination: A Poet's Transformation into a Liberating God"

Brent Eiklor, "From Game to Text: Chivalric, Yet Relevant, Themes in World of Warcraft"

Hannah Killan, "Watch Me Superman that Hoe: The Rhetoric of a Number One Hip-Hop Song"

Mike Lengel, "Bench to Bench: A Meditation on Nature and Civilization"

Sara Moyer, "Are They Just Harmless Cartoons?"

Mary Nance, "The Pro-Life Cause: Solidifying Actions and Suggestive Signs"

Amanda Shumway, "A Passion for Fashion: The Rhetoric of Bratz Dolls"

## Study Abroad Opportunities

**Offerings for Summer 2008**

Summer programs to Chile, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, India, and Uruguay are available through ISEP. Check the ISEP site for more information ( http://www.isep.org/Downloads/Brochures_Flyers/summer_2008/summer_2008.pdf)

**Fall 2008**

**Programs taught in English** allow students to choose from a host of courses at over 70 universities in 24 countries. Please check http://www.isep.org/students/US_students/language_considerations.html for a list of countries and universities.

**Language study:**

If students want to study in Spanish, German, or French, ISEP has places available next fall at universities in Austria, Germany, Mexico, Spain, or France, as well as on Reunion Island and the French Antilles.

**Our Study-Abroad Programs: MU Direct Exchanges**

For our direct exchange with **Volgograd State University in Russia** next fall, contact Dr. Monique Oyallon. The application deadline is March 15. Students

## Path to Wordly Teaching

–by Dr. Monique Oyallon

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and I was ready to go get the formal training I did not have in the area of French. To my surprise, I received the award (equivalent to a sabbatical) and left Poland for Paris. In Paris, besides the training in applied linguistics, pedagogy, cultural promotion, and schmoozing offered at the famous "BELC" (Bureau d'Etude de la langue et de la civilization)—a product of the now defunct 1960s ambitious linguistic policies on the part of the French government—I started a Master's program in French as a foreign language, and eventually continued in the doctoral program at the University of Paris (the Sorbonne) with the philosopher and sociologist Louis Porcher as my thesis advisor. I came to Mansfield at the end of my BELC year, and started teaching French at Penn State University in State College, PA, the year after that. Later I finished my Ph.D. in Paris.

At Penn State, I originally taught language classes (grammar, composition, oral French) and coordinated the teaching assistants for the third semester of French, then moved more into teaching culture courses (history and contemporary civilization), including one general education course taught in English, "France and the Francophone world."

After fourteen year teaching at Penn State, I came to Mansfield.

So what drew me to the field of French as a foreign language and the profession of a French teacher? It seems that my love for Russia helped me shape a new definition of my professional ambitions. In pursuing my Russian dream, I discovered that teaching my own French language and the culture that goes with it in another (foreign) country like Russia or Latvia or the USA was, after all, the closest I could get to my original vocation.

do not need a previous knowledge of Russian.

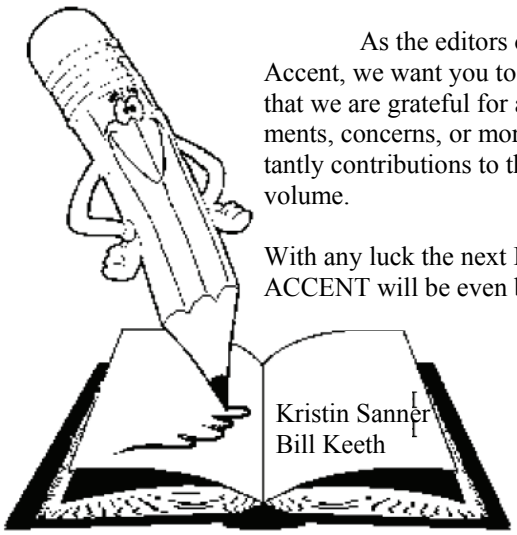
For our direct exchange program with **Friedrich-Schiller-Universitat in Jena**, Germany, contact Dr. Bradley Holtman. Students need two years of college-level German

For our direct exchange program with **Nipissing University in North Bay, Ontario**, Canada, contact Dr. Robert Timko. Students do not need knowledge of another language.

For our direct exchange program with **Charles Sturt University in Australia**, contact Dr. Monique Oyallon. The application deadline is April 15 and spaces are limited.

For our direct exchange program with the **Institute of Political Science, in Toulouse,** France, contact Dr. Monique Oyallon. The application deadline is March 15. Students need two years of college-level French and can apply for courses in economics, management, criminal justice, and political science either in the fall or spring semesters or the whole year. The Toulouse Music Conservatory will accept music students in cooperation with the Institute of Political Sciences, provided they pass a successful audition.

You can check details on MU exchange programs at this site: http://www.mansfield.edu/~international/ You can read about the ISEP program here: http://www.isep.org/



As the editors of the Accent, we want you to know that we are grateful for any comments, concerns, or more importantly contributions to the next volume.

With any luck the next EML ACCENT will be even better.

Kristin Sanner
Bill Keeth

## Faculty News

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**Dr. Tom Murphy's** biographical sketch of George Washington Sears, or Nessmuk, appeared in *Early American Nature Writers: A biographical Encyclopedia*, edited by Daniel Patterson.

**Dr. Lynn Pifer** presented her paper, "Broken Glass, Shattered Dreams: Birmingham 1963 in Fiction and Film" at the *Lousiville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900*, at the University of Louisville, where she also chaired a panel titled "Pop Culture: Reifications and Possibilities."

At the end of March she will present her paper, "Traumatic Possession and Reconciliation in Julius Lester's *And All Our Wounds Forgiven"* at the annual *Multi Ethnic Literature of the United States* (MELUS) conference at Ohio State University. Lester's novel portrays the struggles some former civil rights workers continue to face many years after the assassination of their leader. Her paper examines the novel in terms of Cathy Caruth's trauma theory. Both conference papers examine texts that she is writing about for her sabbatical project, a book-length study of novels based on events from the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.

**Dr. Kristin Sanner's** essay, "'A man makin' pies out of sorrel!': Exploring Issues of Gender and Family in Mary Wilkins Freeman's *Pembroke*," will be published in the collection *You Are What You Eat: Literary Probes into the Palate* this spring. In April she will attend the annual NEMLA Conference in Buffalo, NY, where will present her essay, "A Disturbingly Hearty Meal: Race, Consumerism and Cannibalism in Chesnutt's 'Dave's Neckliss.'"

**Dr. Edward Washington's** article on the Barack Obama presidential candidacy appeared in the "Guest View" section of the *Elmira Star-Gazzette*, Sunday, 2/10/08, in conjunction with Black History Month.

Life is a foreign language:
all men mispronounce it.

Christopher Morley
(1890–1957)